

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7226

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: LOCAL PRESS REACTION TO KIRK VISIT

1. NEW ZEALAND NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE OF PRIME MINISTER NORMAN KIRK'S US VISIT 20 TO 30 OCTOBER WAS EXTENSIVE AND FAVORABLE, CONVEYING IMPRESSION OF WARM WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT AND HARMONIOUS US-NZ RELATIONS. MAIN TELEVISION NEWSCAST CARRIED FOUR MINUTES EACH BY SATELLITE OF KIRK'S UN ADDRESS AND MEETING AND DINNER WITH PRESIDENT NIXON INCLUDING COMMENTARY FROM NZBC REPORTER BARRY JORDAN WHO ACCOMPANIED KIRK AND WHO FILED SEVERAL STORIES DAILY FOR RADIO AND TV FROM WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK. NEWSPAPERS GAVE BIG PLAY NO STORIES BY NZPA WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT BRUCE KOHN. "DOMINION" CAPITAL CITY MORNING USED BANNER HEADLINE TYPE FOR FRONT PAGE DISPATCH HEADED "FLAG SALUTE WELCOMES PM TO US TALKS" AND LARGEST DAILY, "NZ HERALD" OF AUCKLAND, ALSO FRONT PAGED. PRESIDENT'S DINNER TOAST, KIRK'S UN REMARKS, HIS ADDRESS TO NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, KOHN STORY FEATURING POSSIBILITY OF INCREASED TRADE BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES, PLUS WIREPICTURES OF NIXONS AND KIRK

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AT WHITE HOUSE, REINFORCED IMPRESSION OF HIGHLY

SUCCESSFUL VISIT.

2. EDITORIAL IN "EVENING POST", OF WELLINGTON WAS EQUIVOCAL AND SUGGESTED SOMETHING SINISTER IN THE SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES AGREED ON. "THE DOMINION", HOWEVER, SAW POSITIVE RESULTS STEMMING FROM THE VISIT AND CONCLUDED ITS EDITORIAL AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: BUT THE SMALL MINDED ASPECTS OF OUR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS ASIDE, THE MISSION TO NEW YORK AND THE UNITED NATIONS, AND THEN TO WASHINGTON WERE IMPORTANT AND SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE MR KIRK HAS THE STATURE TO CARRY THESE THINGS OFF. IN SPITE OF THE IDEALISM EXPRESSED IN NEW YORK THE VISIT TO WASHINGTON WAS THE MORE SIGNIFICANT, SPECIALLY AS IT COINCIDED WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT AT LAST OF THE APPOINTMENT OF AN AMBASSADOR TO REPRESENT THE UNITED STATES HERE. PRESIDENT NIXON HAS NOT HAD ADEQUATE REPRESENTATION IN THIS COUNTRY, AND THE ARRIVAL OF AN EXPERIENCED CAREER DIPLOMAT WILL MEAN MUCH TO WELLINGTON.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE POLITICAL ESPIONAGE INQUIRIES, COMPLICATED NOW BY THE CRIMINAL ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE VICE PRESIDENT, IT HAD SEEMED THAT THE EXECUTIVE ARM OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE A LAME DUCK FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TERM. THE MEETING BETWEEN MR KIRK AND MR NIXON, AND THE APPOINTMENT OF AMBASSADOR FARLAND TO NEW ZEALAND, PROMISES THAT US-NZ RELATIONS WILL BE AFFECTED MINIMALLY. END QUOTE

3. IN CONTRAST, W.P. REEVES, "THE DOMINION'S" SARDONIC POLITICAL COLUMNIST, CLAIMED PRESIDENT NIXON USED KIRK VISIT TO TRY TO RESTORE HIS TARNISHED WATERGATE IMAGE WITH ELECTORATE. VANDIVIER

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